Chief Justice and other Heads of Departments and Offices and several non-official gentlemen.

IV. The Dewan opened the Assembly with the following

ADDRESS.

PRELIMINARY.

"Gentlemen,

By command of His Highness the Maha Raja, I have the pleasure to welcome you to the Fourteenth Session of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly. Copies of the Administration Report for 1092 M. E., will, as usual, be placed in your hands, from which you will learn in detail how the work of administration of the State was conducted during the year.

2. **Shashtyabdapurti.**—I cannot commence my address more appropriately than by a reference to the most important event of 1917 for Travancore, the *Shashtyabdapurti* of His Highness the Maha Raja. This auspicious event, which took place on the 24th September last, was celebrated with becoming splendour and enthusiasm in every town and village throughout the State and even in such distant countries as Malaysia. The warm tribute of loyalty and devotion which found expression on that happy day is a striking manifestation of the deep attachment of the people of Travancore to their beloved Ruler. "I assure you", said His Highness the Maha Raja in concluding his reply to the people's address presented on that memorable occasion, "that my greatest happiness lies in the welfare of my people". These inspiring words, so characteristically expressed, are still ringing in our ears and furnish the keynote to the remarkable hold which His Highness has over the hearts of his subjects. Let us avail ourselves of the opportunity afforded to us by this Session of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly to once again send forth, in reverent gratitude, our fervent prayers to the Almighty for His Highness' long life, health and happiness.

3. **The War.**—The end of the terrible war is not yet in sight, though there are ample indications of the triumph of British righteousness over Prussian brute force. His Highness the Maha Raja has made a further contribution of Bh. Rs. 1,00,000 to the Madras War Fund and the State has invested Bh. Rs. 15,00,000 in the Government of India War Bonds of 1920. Following the noble example set by His Highness, His Highness' subjects have also contributed towards the Indian War Loan to the best of their capacity. The monthly contribution of His Highness the Maha Raja and the officers of the State towards the maintenance of 'Madras', the hospital ship whose invaluable services in connection with war relief are so well-known, is being continued. As in 1915, local exhibits were collected and forwarded for the Madras Exhibition of Indian Arts and Industries, held in December 1917 under the distinguished patronage of His Excellency the Governor for financing this hospital ship. His Highness the Maha Raja has further promised to afford to the Paramount Power every assistance in securing recruits from Travancore for the Indian Army, and with this object, Mr. O. M. Cheriyan, Inspector of Vernacular Schools, Northern Range, has been appointed District Assistant Recruiting Officer for Travancore. As loyal and patriotic subjects of His Highness the Maha Raja and as the representatives of the people in this Assembly, I earnestly invite your attention to the notification on the subject recently published in the Gazette and request your cordial co-operation with Mr. Cheriyan in his onerous task. Subjects of His Highness the Maha Raja who enlist in the combatant ranks of the Indian Army will be given special facilities in the matter of the registry of *puduval* lands and a set of rules on the subject has been recently issued.

4. **Personnel.**—Since the last Session of the Assembly there have been some notable changes in the higher ranks of the public service. Mr. A. M. Muthunayagam Pillai, Puisne Judge of the High Court, retired at the commencement of 1093, after an honourable official career. Mr. K. Narayana Menon, Dewan Peishkar and District Magistrate, and Mr. K. Sankara Pillai, District and Sessions Judge, have

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also retired, since the close of 1092, after long periods of useful public service. Captain F. E. Welch, Commandant of the First Battalion, Nayar Brigade, reverted to the British service. Mr. T. R. Ratnam Aiyar, Chief Account Officer and *ex-officio* Financial Secretary to Government, proceeded on leave preparatory to retirement, in Edavam 1092, and Mr. N. Narayana Pillai, Senior Assistant Account Officer, was promoted to that post. Mr. Narayana Pillai died suddenly a few months after assuming charge and the service has lost in him an unassuming, honest and popular officer. The unexpected death of Mr. K. Kochukrishna Marar, Additional Puisne Judge of the High Court, who was only very recently appointed to that post from the High Court bar, is a heavy public loss. I have also to chronicle the sad death in action of Mr. A. W. Thomas, one of the four engineer officers of the State engaged in war duty. Mr. Thomas was a young and promising officer and his untimely death is deeply deplored.

FINANCE.

5. **Summary of transactions.**—The revenue and receipts of the State rose from Rs. 1,52,79,386 in 1091 to Rs. 1,63,43,576 in 1092 and the ordinary expenditure from Rs. 1,45,75,660 to Rs. 1,53.24,370, resulting in a surplus of Rs. 10,19,206. Including the capital outlay on the Extension of the Railway from Quilon to Trivandrum amounting to Rs. 11,93,112, the total expenditure of the year was Rs. 1,65,17,482, giving a net deficit of Rs. 1,73,906. The assets of the Government at the end of 1092 amounted to Rs. 1,26,55,608 and the liabilities to Rs. 82,72,247, leaving a closing balance of Rs. 43,83,361. The revenue for the year was the highest on record, showing an increase of Rs. 8,68,911 over that for 1089, the year immediately preceding the war. It is gratifying to note that the receipts from as many as four out of the six main sources of revenue, *viz.*, 'Forest', 'Excise', 'Customs' and 'Stamps', have reached higher figures than those in any previous year. The receipts under 'Land Revenue' would also have exhibited similar results but for the modification in the system of budget classification introduced in recent years in regard to that source of revenue. The expenditure for 1092 was also the highest on record, if the abnormal year of 1090 be left out of account. In almost all branches of administration and particularly in those intimately connected with the well-being of the people such as 'Education', the expenditure was liberal as in the preceding years.

6. The balance to the credit of the Government, which stood at Rs. 75,78,050 at the close of 1087, fell to Rs. 43,83,361 at the close of 1092 as already stated. Against this, however, it has to be noted that an outlay of Rs. 41,48,105 has been incurred during the last five years from the general revenues on the Extension of the Railway from Quilon to Trivandrum, and that, if this expenditure were not taken into calculation, the results would show a net surplus of Rs. 9,53,416—a feature by no means unsatisfactory in view of the general depression in commerce and business activities caused by the war. The present financial position of the Government may, no doubt, be taken as sound. It will, however, be necessary in future to guard against any unlimited growth of expenditure, while at the same time the need for the natural expansion of the several departments has to be borne in mind and adequately provided for, which can only be done by a further development of the resources of the State.

7. **Sinking Funds.**—You are already aware of the Sinking Fund created in 1088 to meet the capital liability of the State, amounting to Bh. Rs. 1,18,47,367, on account of the Shencottah–Quilon Railway. A sum of two lakhs of British rupees is paid from the general revenues every year to the credit of this fund for discharging the entire liability by 1944 A. D. Another Sinking Fund on a smaller scale was started in 1092 to repay the Debenture loan of Bh. Rs. 14,49,000 raised by the Government for meeting a portion of the outlay required for the Quilon–Trivandrum Extension of the Railway. A sum of Rs. 36,600 will be annually paid to this fund for a period of 25 years, at the close of which the loan will be discharged.

8. **Account Office.**—In 1085, the Darbar obtained the loan of the services of Mr. F. D. Gordon of the Indian Finance Department for examining its system

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